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John RICHARDSON

X Line 2 William C.

TRUE HEART

Probers Ask: Who Calls Shots At War Front?

Congressional probers looking into the explosive situation in South Viet Nam have returned with some serious doubts about who is running the U.S. embassy in Saigon.

While Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge is supposed to be in charge of operations there, members of a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee headed by Rep. Clement Zablocki, (D-Wis.), discovered in their on-the-spot investigation that U.S. Minister-Counsel William C. Trueheart appears to be calling the shots.

The legislators unexpectedly caught Trueheart, the No. 2 State Department official in Saigon for the past two years, frantically signaling Lodge not to discuss sensitive questions raised by the committeemen during their briefing in the U.S. embassy.

While sitting strategically behind the legislators, Trueheart was sighted several times waving his hands furiously or shaking his head "no" when Lodge began discussing differences between his staff, the military, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

"A number of times when Ambassador Lodge began to tell us something important, he either stopped or changed the subject when Trueheart began waving his hands," Rep. William Murphy, (D-Ill.), reported to members of the full House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Trueheart and John M. Mecklin, who heads up the 21-man U.S. Information Agency staff in Saigon, spent their time channeling the legislators to briefings by U.S. civilian officials strongly biased against President Diem.

The lawmakers also learned that Trueheart, a former State Department intelligence official, had a major role in the sudden recall of John Richardson, the CIA's mission chief in Saigon.